

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 16 November 2022

Present: Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf

Linda Goodwin, Julie Thompson, Mohamed Parekh, Lauren Nicholson Ward, Judy Wyman, Vickie Longson, Zoe Cahalan, Vicky Priestley, Philip Atkins, OBE, Paul Northcott, Kath Perry, MBE and Amy Bayliss-Fox

Also in attendance: Mary Gale and Simon Humble (Clerk)

PART ONE

132. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Resolved: That:

- a. Rev. Preb. Michael Metcalf be appointed as Chair of the SACRE until November 2023.
- b. Lauren Nicholson-Ward be appointed as Vice-Chair of the SACRE until November 2023.

133. Apologies

Apologies were received from Gabi Oldfield, Maddy Belle, Sam Kirwan, Sam Phillips, Cllr Mike Wilcox and Cllr Paul Snape.

134. Welcome to New Members

The SACRE formally welcomed Claire Tomlinson to represent the Roman Catholic church.

135. Declaration of Any other Business

There were no declarations of any other business on this occasion.

136. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2022

A minor amendment was requested of Minute 127 to change the word "rethinker" to "rethinkre".

Resolved: That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 29 June 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

137. An Update on Key Issues - including workforce information

The SACRE considered the report which covered the main issues affecting Religious Education (RE) in Staffordshire since the last meeting. Further to the written report, the following information was provided:

Continuous Professional Development

Entrust have approached Mary Gale to run face to face courses to provide network support for teachers. The autumn course is book for 22 November 2022, and to date 28 schools have booked onto this course.

Governors continue to receive updates on RE, the status of the Agreed Syllabus (AS) and the process for the review through the "Governor Information Pack". Governors had also been encouraged to discuss the impact of the current AS. This information had reached 300 plus schools and over 200 leaders from these school joined an update webinar where RE was discussed as part and parcel of the information provided.

Update on RE Quality Mark application- St Chad's Pattingham

The SACRE heard that St Chad's Pattingham had received the SACRE grant to enable them to apply for this quality mark. The RE lead was working through the requirements collecting evidence for the virtual assessment. Mary Gale had supported the school to ensure they had a strong evidence base before the assessment. The school is awaiting its assessment date.

Westhill Legacy project- Explore, Engage, Reflect (EER) in conjunction with Youth Net.

The SACRE were reminded that funding had been provided for this project from the 2022-2023 budget through commissioning the Entrust Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) to deliver workshops in conjunction with Youth Net. There had been a delay in the release of money from the SACRE budget, but this had now been released and dates for the Spring term 2023 support had been arranged.

Work force data for 2021

The workforce data is a database of statistics provided by schools indicating how many hours are taught on each subject matter – this primarily affects each Middle and High schools. Of the schools in Staffordshire there has been an improvement of hours spent on religious education in high schools in comparison to the last figures provided.

Standards

The SACRE heard that the GCSE system continued to use the new grading of 9-1, with 9 being the exceptional grade. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the summer exam series for the 2019/2020 academic year was cancelled for all schools in the UK and grades were awarded following a different process in Central Assessed Grades (CAGs). This continued into the 2020/21 academic

year where they became Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). Exams resumed with some modifications in 2022. This led to a large increase in the share of top grades. Historical data was provided to demonstrate Staffordshire’s Religious Studies GCSE performance (achieving grades 9 to 4) against the national average. The table below shows the figures.

Year	Area Average	Grade	Percentage
2019	National	9 to 4	72.3%
	Staffordshire	9 to 4	65.9%
2020	National	9 to 4	80.5%
	Staffordshire	9 to 4	76.4%
2021	National	9 to 4	80.2%
	Staffordshire	9 to 4	77.5%
2022	National	9 to 4	76.7%
	Staffordshire	9 to 4	73.4%

The SACRE heard that, in England, the number of Religious Studies A-level exam entries in 2021 had increased by 6.1%. The subject had outperformed other A-level subjects, which increased by 5.1%, with a greater increase than most other humanities subjects - these results reversed the decline of 11.5% in 2020. It was noted, however, that the data provided suggested that only 53 pupils had sat a Religious Studies exam in Staffordshire. This number was being challenged and confirmation was awaited.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

138. NASACRE Update

The SACRE heard that the draft annual report, which would be presented later in the meeting, was a document that was produced by law and passed on to maintained schools in the county, to the County Council itself, to NASACRE, and to the Department for Education (DfE). Due to a lack of comeback from the DfE, NASACRE was prompted to commission Dr Hampshire (ex-chair of NASACRE) to analyse the reports and report on his findings. This would support the delivery and development of all future annual reports. This was welcomed by the Staffordshire SACRE.

NASACRE is continuing to collaborate with the development of regional RE Hubs, an initiative which is gaining momentum, and which is receiving a certain level of funding from educational trusts. The organisation of these Hubs corresponds to the regional distinction divisions which the DfE is working on. There may be need for the Staffordshire SACRE to collaborate with its regional hub in the future.

NASACRE has been involved with other educational departments to lobby the government, whilst the School's Bill is in suspension, in a hope that improvements can be secured and gaps in provision can be filled, should the School's Bill go forward.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

139. Agreed Syllabus conference

The Education Act 1996 requires Local Authorities to review its locally AS every five years. Staffordshire's syllabus was due to be reviewed in 2021 but due to the fallout from COVID-19 this was delayed. An Agreed Syllabus (AS) Conference had to be established in order to agree the revised AS. This would then be formally approved by the County Council.

The SACRE meeting was adjourned in order for the Agreed Syllabus Conference to be convened.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) was convened. Attendance and apologies were as for the meeting of SACRE.

- a. The minutes of the last meeting held on 29 June 2022 were agreed.
- b. Further to the report, Mary Gale updated the ASC on the work undertaken since the last meeting and presented a final draft of the AS for discussion and approval.

The ASC was provided with the final draft of the AS for approval. By way of an update the SACRE were informed that:

- a vision had now been included to complement the aims of the overall AS.
- more detail had been included explaining that the AS sought to achieve this vision through following three specific themes - Exploring, Engaging, and Reflecting, supported by six dimensions.
- additional references had been made to nonreligious beliefs and world views.
- a number of appendices had been added to the document as examples of lesson planning to support delivery of the AS, as it was noted that this was often requested by schools.

A debate ensued about the way in which "world views" was presented. It was suggested that this could be one word, two words, two words hyphenated, one word capital W, or two words capital W and V. The NATRE website and teaching documents presented this as one word (without a capital W). It was initially suggested that, to keep consistency, this should be the way it was presented in the Agreed Syllabus. However, it was argued that it was grammatically correct to display it as two separate words as it was essentially the way in which a person "viewed the world". It was agreed to consistently display the term "world view" as two words throughout the Agreed Syllabus, with additional detail added to the footnote on page 5 of the document to state that the "Staffordshire SACRE had chosen the editorial

principle of presenting “world view” as two words but acknowledged that it was often referred to as one word”.

Additionally, some amendments were requested to be made to names included in the acknowledgments section of the document. Prior to publication, the format of the graphics and text would also be checked.

The Chair then invited each group of the ASC to vote as to whether they were happy to adopt the text as the Agreed Syllabus for 2023 to 2028 to present to the SACRE for adoption. Each group was asked in turn to vote with the following result:

Group A – unanimously voted in favour of the text going forward.

Group B – unanimously voted in favour of the text going forward.

Group C – unanimously voted in favour of the text going forward.

Group D – unanimously voted in favour of the text going forward.

Following this the next steps of the approval process were outlined to the SACRE, and it was agreed that a further update of the approval process would be given at the SACRE meeting due to take place in February 2023.

Following approval, it was explained that a launch programme would be organised to take place in early 2023 where schools would be invited to attend a presentation of the new AS. A transition period would take place in the spring and summer terms of the 2022/23 academic year, with full implementation taking place from the start of the new academic year 2023 onwards.

Resolved: That:

- a. the Agreed Syllabus conference agreed to adopt the text and present it to the SACRE as the Agreed Syllabus for 2023 to 2028.
- b. an update of the approval process of the Agreed Syllabus be brought to the SACRE meeting due to take place in February 2023.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting was adjourned in order for the SACRE to be reconvened.

140. Adoption of the Agreed Syllabus

SACRE officially received the Agreed Syllabus. Moving forwards, this would be passed on to the appropriate Cabinet Member for Staffordshire County Council ahead of it being authorised, published and distributed to schools.

Resolved: That the Agreed Syllabus be officially received by the SACRE.

141. SACRE Annual Report for 2021-2022

The SACRE received the draft SACRE Annual Report from the academic year 2021-22. This followed the template guidance supplied by NASACRE and included the following items.

- Introduction
- A summary of the work of SACRE 2021-2022
- Standards and quality of RE provision including Collective worship
- Managing the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other stakeholders
- The effectiveness of the local agreed syllabus and the review process
- Contribution of the SACRE to the wider community
 - Knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural and ethnic minority

Resolved: That the Annual Report be approved.

142. The SACRE Budget 2022-2023

Members were informed that, of the budget of £6,114.00 that was currently available to the SACRE, the following commitments had been made from the SACRE annual allowance:

7 days for Agreed Syllabus work with MEAS team	-	£3,150.00
4 days for AS support and planning	-	£1,800.00
Agreed Syllabus Launch	-	£1,000.00

Resolved: That the SACRE Budget 2022-2023 be received.

143. Development Plan

The Development plan was presented to the SACRE. The SACRE advisor spent some time explaining the objectives, activities, and the RAG rating which estimated the success of each objective.

Resolved: That the Development Plan be noted.

144. Applications for variation of practice

There were none on this occasion.

145. Dates of next meetings

Dates of next meetings - All meetings commence at 2:00pm unless otherwise stated.

- 01 February 2023
- 28 June 2023

- 15 November 2023

**Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Chairman**